



Developer Meeting Notes (Flexdart LTD & NWBC) 29.03.23

In attendance: Chris Fellows & Martin Lynch (FB Architects), Nick Bevan (Flexdart Ltd / Beaver Metals), Andrew Collinson (NWBC Planning Officer), Cllr Bevan, Cllr Rees, Cllr Stuart (from item X) and Kate Clover, Clerk (WOPC)

NWBC – Currently there are two planning applications for the site, one with NWBC regarding the commercial units and another with WCC regarding changes to the recycling facility.

Flexdart / Beaver Metals – WCC have insisted that recycling facility must remain on site as they feel no other suitable sites to offer so plans with NWBC & WCC have been amended to meet this requirement. The amendments to the plans means recycling facility and employment of the local workforce will continue at the site.

WOPC – Paul Wilcox from WCC Planning have agreed an extension to 11th April for comments from WOPC regarding this application.

Flexdart / Beaver Metals – The site has been operating recycling works since 1957 and by Beaver Metals since the eighties. The lake on site was part of the original S106 agreement for the site and will be retained, although a section of this lake will be filled and this land used for an extension to Unit D. This will be carefully managed, water & wildlife will be transferred to remainder of the lake and ensure materials used to fill will not contaminate the lake or rivers.

FB Architects – Provided an explanation of the plans showing the access road and turning point for HGVs and other site vehicles and the one way system which will help traffic to flow through site, easing any potential congestion at entrance and exits to the site, the exit will be further from the A446 to ensure greater visibility when entering the main road. HGV drivers would continue to be encouraged to turn left out of the site to avoid traffic travelling through the village, especially due to the weight restrictions on the bridges in the village.

It is hoped to avoid gates, or have a punch code if required for security so that any HGV's or vehicles who arrive before the site opens are able to get into the access road which would help

Flexdart / Beaver Metals would like to see weight restriction signage from the entrance to Marsh Lane (stating access only) to help with this. AC advised this would be a matter for Highways to consider not NWBC.

WOPC- Asked whether Turn Left only signage could be incorporated, again this was something that the business would welcome but that would be for Highways to decide. WOPC to consider approaching WCC regarding signage in Marsh Lane. It has been mentioned by residents that they would prefer the 30mph limit to start sooner to reduce speeding through the village and increase the safety of road users when passing this site due to large vehicles entering and exiting the site. Business would welcome this but have been advised that speeds won't be reduced by WCC unless there are fatalities. WOPC had been advised that there was potentially some Highways Funding for improvements in the area, AC advised to speak to County Councillor about this. If the speed limit could not be reduced, could ask WCC regarding the possibility of signage, road painting that advises road users of an upcoming change to the speed limit, to encourage drivers to slow down in advance.

WOPC – Queries have also been received from residents regarding the volume and colour of the smoke pollution.

Flexdart / Beaver Metals – Advised that the smoke was caused by cutting steel, which is done by burning, cutting with a 'hot spanner'. The business has procured a machine worth £250,000 which can cut steel with shears reducing



some of the need to cut by burning (not always possible to avoid this) The Business prefer using this machine where possible as it is cheaper and helps them to produce less smoke, they are tackling this issue and site managers and supervisors will contact staff carrying out these processes if plumes of smoke appear excessive and ask them to slow this process down. They only cut what they need to, to fit the material into the furnace.

The Environment Agency visited the site yesterday (28th March) and NWBC Environmental Health also liaise with the business and although the current situation is not ideal there is not major pollution, and they continue to work with these agencies to reduce pollution and contamination.

The new plans will aim to bring this current external process indoors, if this is achieved then it would be possible to filter the smoke.

WOPC - Queries are often raised about HGV's in the village, sadly the weight restrictions / signage do not seem to work, enquired as to whether a chicane could be introduced following the site to help stop HGV's from accessing the village.

NWBC – Because site has been operational for some time it is felt unlikely WCC Highways will invest in any additional measures but again this could be raised.

WOPC- Enquired whether lake could be classed as a community / village asset,

Flexdart / Beaver Metals - advised that they had previously offered either the lake or the field opposite the site to WOPC but due to an issue surrounding a possible drowning at the lake it hadn't got any further as there were concerns around responsibilities and liabilities. Did not see any reason why the offer of either piece of land could not still be possible

WOPC – more consideration would be required regarding community benefit vs cost implications of acquiring and managing any additional land.

NWBC – If land was acquired by WOPC would be likely subject to conditions surrounding the management of the land.

WOPC– Asked whether any Public Rights of Way (PROW) exist on site

Flexdart / Beaver Metals - PROW goes alongside the river, walkers tend to use the flood bund to walk on which isn't a public footpath but hasn't been discouraged.

WOPC - would have the power to consider the siting of Information boards / benches along a PROW

Flexdart / Beaver Metals - advised they have attempted to provide benches in this area and after frequently replacing due to vandalism no longer provide these.

Sustainable Travel

Group discussion was had regarding sustainable travel to the site, there was a bus stop nr the site but few workers travelled by bus due to the infrequency of this service, cycle parking, motorcycle parking and provision for EV charging and parking was shown on the plans.

Ecology

Storm drains on Marsh Lane are discharged to the Lake. Lake has a culvert to the river. Environment Agency monitor levels of water pollution. Details of the surface water attenuation are contained within the new plans.



Plans also show significant tree planting on site. NWBC would be ensuring that there was a planting scheme of native species and that there were management and maintenance plans put into place to ensure that they achieve a net gain for Biodiversity.

WOPC agreed with the preservation of the green spaces surrounding the site and felt it would be beneficial for the health and wellbeing of the community both workers and residents. Beaver Metals also recognised the importance of retaining the Marsh Land and Lake as local wildlife habitats.

The footpath extends to the A446 and currently this needs to be crossed to continue the footpath, there had been previous discussion with a Borough Councillor regarding creating access under the motorway and developing a cycle path which had not progressed.

WOPC – What are the proposed hours of operation?

Flexdart / Beaver Metals / FB Architects – Details of this will be within the planning application but it is believed to be weekdays from 7am and then by exception on a Saturday AM. They haven't looked to extend operational hours so it is believed to be much the same as currently with mainly daytime operations.

WOPC – What plans are there regarding illuminated signage in terms of both ecological considerations (light pollution) and the visual impact upon the village.

Flexdart / Beaver Metals / FB Architects – Details of the lighting scheme have not yet been drafted, understood the Parish Council concerns regarding any excessive illumination. WOPC noted that the site was likely to mainly be used during the daytime and so hoped lighting would have no need to be excessive and would need to align with planning policies in terms of being an LED lighting scheme and consideration given to direction of any lighting. NWBC could consider a planning condition around the lighting scheme.

WOPC – Queried the height of the units to see how this would impact the visual amenity from the street scene.

Flexdart / Beaver Metals / FB Architects - Unit D would have 8m of headroom, Units 3, 4 & 5 would need 11m of headroom (these are further back from the street scene which should have less impact).

The recycling plant would require headroom of 14m for the large equipment, this was closer to the motorway and back from the street scene and planting scheme would aim to help with the visual impact of the site.